

Lessons Learned from Hurricane Isabel VDH Bioterrorism Drill 2003

Preliminary report from the Lessons
Learned Panel

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Panel Mission

Review lessons learned & provide the Commissioner with recommendations to institutionalize and implement lessons learned.

Goal

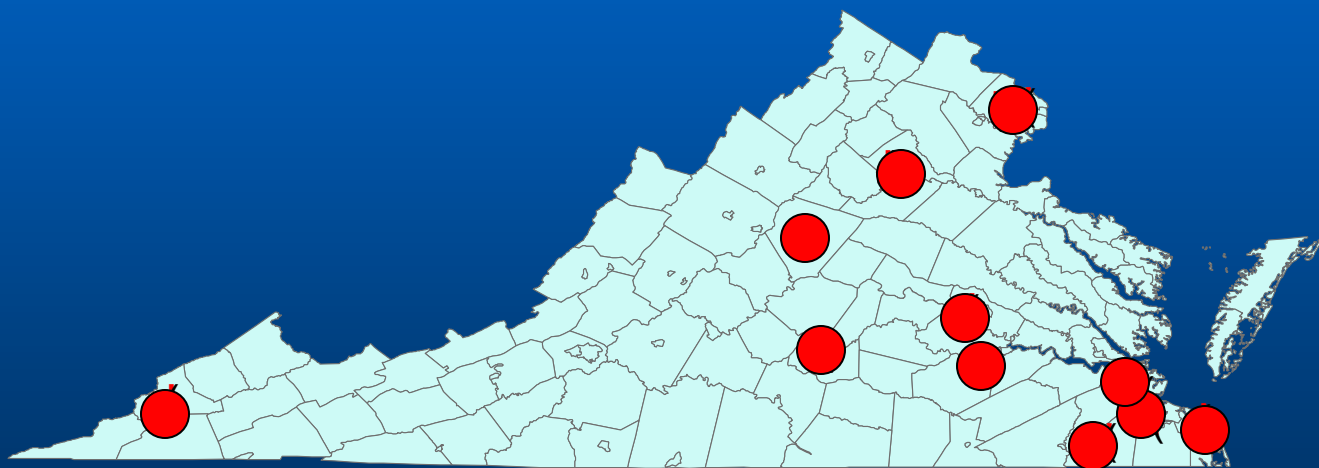
Identify action items that will most effectively move VDH forward in its EP&R capabilities with full knowledge of the impact on health district/central office workload

VDH Lessons Learned Panel 2004



Major Areas of Focus for Lessons Learned Panel:

- o Roles
- o Communication
- o Surge Capacity

Focus on unique capabilities of VDH Staff to ensure those are not disrupted by roles others could perform. Panel recommendations based on core principles.



Legend

-  Location of Lessons Learned Panel Members
-  Virginia Counties and Demographics

Process

Foundation Principles

VDH staff have unique
capabilities & responsibilities
to protect & promote the
public health of Virginia's
citizens

Foundation Principles

Public health has responsibility for population-based services that cannot legally or effectively be provided by others:

- a. Monitoring Community Health
- b. Communicable Disease Control
- c. Oversight of public food and water supplies
- d. Information/education/guidance to the general public

Foundation Principles

Public health resources should be
used for the well being of the
overall community

Foundation Principles

Well-being of the general community may be best served by focusing on groups within the community whose needs otherwise would not be addressed, and where failure to address those needs would adversely effect the general community's well-being

Foundation Principles

VDH and its component local health departments operate under the authority, obligations and expectations of state and local governments

VDH staff perform their public health responsibilities within the legal and political framework of state and local government and communities

Foundation Principles

Health department staff provide mandated and contracted public health services, including public health emergency preparedness and response

Foundation Principles

Daily provision of these services varies based in response to changing local needs and priorities, utilizing the best information and evidence available

Foundation Principles

Local health departments in Virginia
operate as part of VDH

Application of local resources in other
jurisdictions is an expected response to
critical needs

Foundation Principles

Limited public health resources should be used in a prioritized and strategic manner

Thus, the health department will not provide some services

Foundation Principles

Provision of information and guidance to others is often as important as direct provision of services

Foundation Principles

VDH staff alone cannot provide most public health services

Partnerships, at all levels of the agency, ensure that public health needs are met

Focus areas

- Leadership/Roles
- Drinking Water & Food Safety
- Disease Monitoring & Control
- Role of State & Local EOPs
- Role of Regional Teams
- Shelter Staffing & Operations
- Communications Process & Equipment
- Public Information & Education
- Public Health Surge
- Chemical/Radiation

Preliminary Recommendations...

Leadership/Roles

- Implementation of recommendations will require leadership at all levels
- Panel members remain available as a review group for subsequent events

Environmental Health

- Issue: Lack of coordinated response
- Organize committee composed of LHDs, Environmental Health & Office of Drinking Water
 - Coordinate & revise emergency response protocol
 - Clarify the communications & decision making processes
 - Ensure plans are consistent with one another

Environmental Health Office of Drinking Water

- Prepare waterworks owner & operators for emergency response
- Prepare ODW Staff
- Prepare private Educate public on testing & disinfecting well water

Environmental Health Septic

- Require pre-event planning--reduce risk & inconvenience
 - Community education
 - Resource recommendations

Environmental Health Septic

- Information sheets for homeowners & facility mgrs
 - How systems work
 - Determine system safety
 - Option to use Pump & Haul

Environmental Health

Food Safety

- Develop state policies on steps to reopen permitted food service facilities & grocery stores after prolonged loss of power
 - Provide specific steps for VDH, facility or grocer and LHD

Environmental Health

Food Safety

- Coordinate with VA Department of Agricultural Services to develop simple, easy to understand info sheets that:
 - Help determine relative safety of home food supplies & equipment
 - Provide steps to make food/equipment safe
 - Advise when food or equipment should be discarded

Environmental Health Food Safety

- Collaborate with VDACS to develop specific protocols addressing:
 - Food salvage
 - Sanitizing contaminated environmental surfaces
 - Safe food storage practices

Environmental Health

Food Safety

- Develop MOA with VDACS to perform pre-event planning with food service industry to reduce problems and facilitate rapid resumption of safe food service
 - When establishment can open w/out inspection
 - Partnering with other establishments to contract mobile refrigeration service
 - Moving potentially hazardous food supplies to unaffected locations
 - Pooling of other resources

Disease Monitoring and Control

- Train VDH workforce on spectrum of activities involved in the PH response & how they fit together

Disease Monitoring and Control

- Identify potential responders within & outside agency to ensure coverage

Disease Monitoring and Control

- Develop system to collect & report disease info from local, district, regional, state & federal levels

Disease Monitoring and Control

- Provide additional training on epidemiologic methods used in all PH responses
 - To VDH workforce—all levels in all programs

Disease Monitoring and Control

- Develop guidelines & materials for implementing & enforcing isolation & quarantine
 - Train staff to follow those guidelines

Role of State & Local EOP

- Develop a process to review state level plans across agencies to ensure VDH responsibilities are consistent with the principles
- Clarify state & local health department responsibilities

Role of the Regional Teams

- Perform an in depth review of the regional team structure and function to ensure:
 - The emergency & daily roles of each position are clearly defined
 - Clear goals with measurable outcomes and milestones are established
 - A balance between local and state needs is achieved

Shelter Staffing & Operations

- Communicate role of LHD staff in shelter operations to other government agencies, health care facilities & internally
 - PHN staffing of emergency shelters should not be an expectation as a general rule

Shelter Staffing & Operations

- Encourage jurisdictions to develop a comprehensive definition of sheltering & implementation
- Define medical service by type of shelter resident
- Elder care agencies develop response plans – arrange for appropriate care

Communications

- Just do it!

Communications

- VDH Central Office provide information that is actionable
- Develop & communicate a clear definition of Communication goals during emergencies

Communications

- Local, Regional and State offices determine information needs specific to type of emergency event in advance, to facilitate information flow
- Use a single source to request info from the field - coordinate info needs at Central Office

Communications

- Central Office determine primary, secondary & tertiary means of communication for variety of situations
- Ensure communication plan provides for redundancy in systems in separate geographic locations

Public Information & Education

- Streamline process by which news releases are approved to allow for timely dissemination
- Identify and disseminate list of predefined Q&A sheets
- Develop simple and easy to understand information sheets for emergency situations

Public Health Surge

- PH Surge defined:
 - Disease Investigation and Control
 - Mass Distribution
 - Isolation and Quarantine
 - Communication necessary to bring about above issues

Public Health Surge

- Will require multidisciplinary group to create meaningful PH surge plan

Chemical/Radiation

- VDH Leadership define State's role in PH chemical and radiological threat preparedness
- Communicate State's role
- Educate public and VDH workforce on State's role

Your feedback